

# Public Health Messages

## Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

November 3, 2015



**Public Health Messages** is a way for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to provide information and guidance to medical providers and hospitals on current issues relating to medical care and public health. It is sent out through the Missouri Health Notification System (MOHNS), and goes to the same individuals and facilities that receive DHSS Health Alerts and Health Advisories. **Public Health Messages** does not replace Health Alerts and Health Advisories, but rather provides an additional way for DHSS to communicate, in the form of brief messages, with providers and hospitals.

### Influenza Season is Approaching

Missouri had over 54,000 individuals test positive for influenza and one pediatric death due to influenza during the 2014-2015 flu season. Some individuals are more at risk of complications from influenza than others, such as children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, individuals with chronic medical conditions, and the elderly. Influenza vaccination is recommended for virtually all persons 6 months of age and older. Vaccination of health care workers is important in controlling the spread of influenza to patients in either an outpatient or inpatient facility.

When should vaccinations start? Influenza season typically starts in October, peaks from December through March, and ends in May. However, influenza cases have occurred from June through September. The general rule of influenza vaccination is to start as soon as vaccine is available and continue vaccinating until the doses expire.

Information and guidance for medical providers on influenza vaccination are available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/index.htm>. Information and guidance on the use of influenza antiviral drugs are found at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm>. For additional information on influenza, go to <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/med/seasonal.php>.

Questions should be directed to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS') Bureau of Immunization at 573/751-6124.

### Think Tuberculosis

*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the causative agent of tuberculosis (TB), usually infects the lungs, but can infect any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If not properly treated, TB disease can be fatal, or drug-resistant organisms can develop. *M. tuberculosis* is transmitted from person to person through the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. Signs/symptoms of TB disease include: cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer, chest pain, hemoptysis, coughing up sputum, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, loss of appetite, chills, fever, and night sweats.

TB remains a problem in the U.S. CDC estimates that nationwide approximately 9 to 14 million people are currently infected with *M. tuberculosis*, and in 2014, 9,421 TB cases were reported. In Missouri in 2014, 79 cases of TB and 3,317 cases of TB infection were reported.

TB infection and TB disease are reportable in Missouri. You can report to your local public health agency or to DHSS. To report to DHSS, complete the Disease Case Report form (see link below) and fax it to 573/526-0234, or call 573/751-6113. For any questions, or for more information, please call DHSS' TB Elimination Program at 573/751-6113.

Information from CDC on TB for medical providers and public health professionals is found at: [http://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/provider\\_edmaterials.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/provider_edmaterials.htm). DHSS' Disease Case Report form is avail-

able at: <http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/tuberculosis/tbmanual/pdf/CD-1.pdf>.

### **Radiation Emergency Medical Management (REMM) Recently Updated**

Radiation Emergency Medical Management, or REMM, (<http://www.remm.nlm.gov/index.html>) is a very useful clinical tool from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which was developed to provide comprehensive guidance for medical providers on the diagnosis and treatment of radiation injury during radiological and nuclear emergencies.

Besides being accessible online, REMM can be downloaded onto a computer hard drive or portable storage device (e.g., a flash drive), and an abbreviated mobile version is available for devices such as cell phones. The information and guidance contained in REMM are periodically updated, with the most recent update occurring in October 2015 (<http://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/news/Pages/remm.aspx>).

It is highly recommended that all medical facilities and health departments have downloaded copies of REMM on computer hard drives and/or portable storage devices in appropriate locations (e.g., emergency rooms) within the facility in case access to the Internet is lost and the tool cannot be viewed online.

Links to comprehensive information and guidance for medical providers and facilities on radiological/nuclear incidents and the medical management of victims of these incidents are available at <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/nucmed.php>. Questions, as well as requests for additional information, should be directed to DHSS' Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology at 573/751-6102.

### **Recent Health Alerts, Advisories, and Updates Sent Out by DHSS**

- CDC Health Advisory: Increases in Fentanyl Drug Confiscations and Fentanyl-related Overdose Fatalities (October 26, 2015)
- CDC Health Update: CDC/FDA Health Update about the Immediate Need for Healthcare Facilities to Review Procedures for Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sterilizing Reusable Medical Devices (October 2, 2015)
- CDC Health Advisory: Immediate Need for Healthcare Facilities to Review Procedures for Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sterilizing Reusable Medical Devices (September 14, 2015)

These, along with previous Health Alerts, Advisories, and Updates, can be accessed by going to <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/index.php>.